Matthew Ramirez

Lottery

A wrinkled piece of thin paper in my hand,
the weight of a receipt, with the same expected shelf-life.

There's a line at the convenience store, each
blue-jeaned customer with two-day stubble,
or a pair of pants closing at the belly-button.

And there's always a story on the news
about the man from Oklahoma who
won big, kept working his job,
and said he was looking forward to retirement.

I dreamt of money angels on grass,
hands the metallic odor of cash,
my heart with the hunger-strike bliss
accompanying me right before death.

I black out.

I left two beer bottles on the dresser, because
I didn't want to walk them to the trash
and I enjoyed the message it sent.

theredbackpack.tumblr.com

My phone remains silent like a Quaker wedding.

The ink from receipts and lottery tickets gives you cancer.
I threw away the ticket before I found out I lost,
added another beer to the collection, slept
on my side, and ran my hand up my leg.
Was there a bump or was I a hypochondriac?

Leave it to hope, no matter how fantastic,
unhealthy, unrealistic, sickeningly material,
selfishly sexual, stubbornly resistant,
to sneak up and kill you. Hope and purchases.

There's a black-and-white dog that's taken
residence at the edge of my driveway.
He sits there until a car pulls in
or pulls out. Everyone else in my family
tries to chase him off with a broom,
but I let him stay, with his head
on the cold concrete, watching kids walk down the street,
hoping for nothing, content to be alone, keeping
watch over a home that isn't his.